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Biology Curators Group Newsletter

Title: Memorandum to all Plastazote users

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Memorandum to all Plastazote users.

Dear

Most entomologists and museum staff will be now very familiar with the white, cross-linked polyethylene sheet material called Plastazote used as drawer lining and for the bottoms of unit trays, store boxes, postal boxes etc. As a material for the pinning of insect specimens it is a lot better than cork or cork compositions because it is easy to cut up and holds pins well.

I have used Plastazote for many years and have not been entirely satisfied with one aspect of its construction; it has an open cell surface which traps dirt, insect scales etc. and can snag claws and appendages. The open cell surface arises from the fact that the material is made in a large block and then cut up into slices leaving open cells which cannot easily be cleaned. I have recently found a material that is in every way similar to Plastazote but with the vital difference that it is supplied with a closed cell, smooth surface. The new material is called **Freelite** and substantially undercuts Plastazote per unit area. The new sheet is also a white, cross-linked polyethylene which handles just as easily if not more easily than Plastazote when cut or trimmed and holds pinned specimens with equal efficiency. Freelite can be ordered in any size and a range of thicknesses (12mm being the grade commonly used for insect pinning) and can be cut to a tolerance of \pm less than 1mm. The new sheet does not discolour or trap dirt and can be sponged or dusted if required and is certainly a step forward in the management of collections and displays.

Here in the Hope Dept. at Oxford we are currently rehousing large parts of the entomological collections in new drawers and racks and have cancelled our order of Plastazote in favour of the new sheet, indeed it has attracted interest from the Zoology Dept. as being a suitable drawer bottom for their collection of pinned crustacea which is soon to be renovated and from the Dept. of Mineralogy where a thin sheet with holes cut in it overlying a base sheet will provide safe storage for small gemstones.

I had thought to write a short note in the scientific press about this find but I considered the lapse of time before you read about it and decided to tell interested parties by means of this circular letter. I enclose a small piece of the new sheet for your inspection and below is the address of the supplier and the name of the sales director.

Yours sincerely.

Dr. George C. McGavin.
Asst. Curator of Entomology.
Hope Entomological Collections
OXFORD OX1 3PW.
U.K.

Address of supplier;

E.S. Corker esq.,
Sales Director,
Chas Freeman Display Products Ltd.
Unit 4, Great West Trading Estate
971 Great West Road
Brentford
Mddsx. TW8 9DN U.K.

Tel.no. 01-568-6451